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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#). Mideast
- [1](#)2. Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

Key stories in the media:

All media led with the disorder in the PA and along the Philadelphia route. While some media, like Jerusalem Post (banner: "Egypt, PA Vow to Stop Gaza Infiltrators") and Ha'aretz (banner: "Abbas Plans to Dismantle Armed PA Factions, End Chaos"), cite Egyptian and PA efforts to establish law and order in the Gaza Strip, other media (like Maariv, Yediot, and Israel Radio) emphasize GOI demands that the PA and Egypt restore order along the Philadelphia route. Israel Radio reported that Israeli security officials told PA Civilian Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan that if the PA does not act in the matter, this would have an influence on the implementation of agreements between Israel and the PA. Leading media cited the IDF's concern that terrorists from Gaza could infiltrate Israel though the Sinai Peninsula. Hatzofe reported that on Monday, Palestinians plundered greenhouses in the former settlement of Ganei Tal. The hothouses were transferred to the Palestinians with funding from the World Bank.

Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz called on U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Kurtzer to apply his influence in order to restore order along the Philadelphia route. Israel Radio reported that Mofaz also turned to U.S. security coordinator Lt. Gen. William Ward. Speaking on Israel Radio from New York this morning, FM Silvan Shalom expressed his belief that the U.S. understands that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas apparently does not intend to abide by his commitments -- according to the road map and at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit -- to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure.

Yediot and Israel Radio quoted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as saying Tuesday, at a meeting with editors of The New York Times, that the U.S. will act to preserve the momentum in Israeli-Palestinian relations and expects to press Israel and the Palestinians to make progress. Under the headline, "Praise Is Over; After the Evacuation: American Pressure on Israel," Yediot quoted Secretary Rice as saying that the U.S. administration will press the sides to implement the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, including an Israeli pullout from the West Bank cities and the release of Palestinian prisoners. The media reported that Secretary Rice praised Israel-PA cooperation, which she said the sides do not recount for political reasons.

The media reported that PM Sharon is expected to meet with U.S. President George W. Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan

today, and with the PMs of Australia, Britain, and Canada on Thursday. Maariv reported that, at his meeting with President Bush, Sharon will raise his demand that Hamas be dismantled. Israel Radio reported that FM Shalom met with Algerian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Bedjaoui and with Indonesian FM Noer Hassan Wirajuda. The radio, which cited denials by Shalom's supposed interlocutors, says that he is scheduled to meet with the FM's of Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, among others.

Yediot reported that on Saturday night, under the motto: "We Have to Continue Toward Peace -- From Gaza to a Final-Status Agreement," the Israeli and Palestinian peace camps will hold two simultaneous demonstrations -- outside Sharon's Jerusalem residence, and in Ramallah. Abbas will lead the Palestinian rally.

Jerusalem Post reported that U.S. Ambassador Dan Kurtzer and his wife Sheila bid farewell to President Moshe Katsav on Monday. The newspaper cited Katsav's expression of high praise for the Kurtzers, who, he said, served U.S. interests in Israel during one of the most difficult and stormy periods in the nation's history. Katsav was quoted as saying that the Ambassador had shown great responsibility, and professionalism. Ambassador Kurtzer reportedly expressed appreciation for Katsav's wise counsel each time it was requested. Jerusalem Post reported that next week Katsav is due to receive the credentials of Kurtzer's successor, Richard Jones. Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday, Yuval Steinitz, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, submitted a bill that would prohibit Israeli citizens from filing lawsuits and criminal complaints in foreign countries against members of Israel's security forces or anyone who was involved in anti-terror activities on behalf of Israel. The move comes in the wake of complaints filed in Britain by the Israeli group Yesh Gvul against the current and former IDF chiefs of staff over their role in the targeted killing of senior Hamas leader Salah Shehadeh in July 2002.

Israel Radio reported that President Bush is trying to convince the Russian and Chinese leaders, with whom he is holding meetings in current days in Washington, to support steps that would ensure that Iran does not procure nuclear weapons. The station quoted Bush as saying, after a meeting with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, that Iran with a nuclear weapon would be destabilizing.

Yediot quoted President Bush as saying that "all options are on the table" regarding possible U.S. action against Syria. Jerusalem Post reported that on Tuesday, the President reiterated his goal to achieve international agreement to put pressure on President Bashar Assad's regime.

Israel Radio reported that over 100 people were killed and dozens of others were wounded in bombings in central Iraq this morning.

Israel Radio reported that at a meeting to be held today in Egypt, the tourism ministers of Israel, the PA, Jordan, and Egypt will discuss the state of tourism in the region.

Angela Merkel, the candidate of the German opposition Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the race for chancellor, was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz that if she wins, Germany would be more involved in the Middle East and fight anti-Semitism in her country. Still, Merkel recognizes the role of the U.S. in the Middle East.

Ha'aretz reported on a meeting held Tuesday in the Israeli Arab city of Umm el-Fahm between guests from the American Jewish Committee, and Mayor Sheikh Hashem Abd al-Rahman, who is identified with the northern branch of the Islamic Movement and known for boycotting Knesset elections. The meeting was organized by Sikkuy, an Arab-Jewish non-profit organization working for equality for Israeli Arabs. The newspaper reported that African-American Wisconsin State Senator Lena Taylor (D), a member of the delegation, "did not hide her identification with the Israeli Arabs' condition." The newspaper cited criticism of the meeting among American Jewish leaders.

Ha'aretz details increasing threats of divestment of Israel by the Presbyterian Church and other American religious congregations, and writes that American Jewish leaders are divided over the gravity of those

steps.

Yediot reported that Likud MK Ayoob Kara has proposed to turn September 11 into a national day of mourning in Israel -- in memory of the burning of the Gaza Strip synagogues.

Yediot reported that a directive the U.S. Homeland Security Department has recently conveyed to the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv stipulates that an Israeli child, one of whose parents is an AmCit, will not automatically acquire U.S. citizenship.

Yediot reported that former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani will come to Israel next Wednesday for a one-day visit, during which he will explain his crime-fighting methods.

All media reported that President Bush took responsibility on Tuesday for federal government failures in handling the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Maariv reported that affluent residents of New Orleans have turned to Israeli guards for the protection of their property.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The successive Israeli cabinet ministers -- from Labor and Likud -- were those who made the historical mistake whose price was paid in blood."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Besides purely selfish interests, democracies ought to consider the debt of gratitude they owe Israel as a bulwark against international terrorism."

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "An unbalanced and disproportionate use of universal authority to bring individuals to trial may sometimes be excessive and unjust, but the abrogation of the option to pursue war criminals wherever they may be could bring the wheels of justice grinding to a halt."

Block Quotes:

I. "The March of Folly"

Veteran op-ed writer and the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assistant Eytan Haber opined in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (September 14): "The [Israeli cabinet's] decision regarding the [Gaza Strip's] synagogues and its immediate consequences are undoubtedly worthy of being cited ... in historian Barbara Tuchman's book, 'The March of Folly'.... We wouldn't mention this, had Shimon Peres not honestly declared Monday that 'settling Gush Katif was a historical mistake.' A historical mistake? This wasn't about an academic exercise. Soldiers and civilians paid with their lives for that historical mistake; others became handicapped, to say nothing of the billions [of dollars] that went up in smoke. A historical mistake? Who erred? The Holy Ghost?.... Absolutely not. The successive Israeli cabinet ministers -- from Labor and Likud -- were those who made the historical mistake whose price was paid in blood."

II. "A Limit to Sedition"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (September 14): "The thought of an Israeli general unable to enter the capital of another democracy for fear of being detained on trumped-up 'war crimes' charges is insufferable enough. The realization that the screeching chorus of Arabs and Muslims out to get him was actually conducted by Israelis is maddening. Yet this is precisely what happened this week.... What Britain's courts were prepared to countenance against Israel could well come back to haunt Britons abroad. Israel's generals are harassed about a single bomb; the allies dumped untold tons of explosives, killing untold numbers of Iraqis and Afghans.... Besides purely selfish interests, democracies ought to consider the debt of gratitude they owe Israel as a bulwark against international terrorism. Had other nations followed Israel's consistent example, the world would be a safer place to live in. But whatever bones we have to pick with friends overseas, the danger of in-house sedition

is far more alarming.... The pretext is [the Israeli group] Yesh Gvul's failure to get the local judiciary to take punitive action against the two. Thus Israelis who can't win their day in Israel's courts, attempt to enlist outside help.... Knesset Member Yuval Steinitz's move to outlaw Yesh Gvul might in other circumstances be dismissed as excessive, especially considering the significant inroads the group has made into normative mainstream opinion and its undoubted popularity with left-wing opinion-molders. But this time Yesh Gvul seems to have crossed all red lines.... As a society faced with existential threats, we cannot afford to have those who defend us become our fall guys."

III. "In the Dock"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (September 14): "The courts in Israel turned their heads when asked to address the demolition of hundreds of houses in Gaza, the expropriation of private lands for the use of the occupying country, and the expulsion of 25,000 Palestinians from their homes in Hebron to expand the Jewish quarter. None of these constitutes valid means in the war on terror. The vacuum created by judges in Israel in dealing with these issues is what led to the appeal to the legal authorities in Europe. One can complain about the hypocrisy of legal authorities that are tough on Israel and easy on other countries. One can ascribe political and anti-Semitic motives to plaintiffs and judges. But it is hard to claim that our hands are clean. Every officer who carries out an order involving serious human rights violations must take into consideration that he will find himself in the dock. An unbalanced and disproportionate use of universal authority to bring individuals to trial may sometimes be excessive and unjust, but the abrogation of the option to pursue war criminals wherever they may be could bring the wheels of justice grinding to a halt."

2. Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina:

Summary:

Columnist Tom Segev wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "There's no disputing Israel is defining its own place somewhere on the edges of the American empire. That's why there's something so troubling about what now appear to be signs of the sinking of that empire."

Block Quotes:

"What's Happening To You, America?"

Columnist Tom Segev wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (September 14): "One can appreciate all the positive brought about by the Americanization [of Israel] without ignoring the negative, but there's no disputing Israel is defining its own place somewhere on the edges of the American empire. That's why there's something so troubling about what now appear to be signs of the sinking of that empire -- the intelligence failures that preceded the attacks on the Twin Towers, the crash of the Columbia. How could it happen, in a country like America? The failed occupation of Iraq -- to find out just how easy it is to conquer a country and how difficult to end its occupation, the U.S. didn't even need National Geographic. All they had to do was follow the news from the territories Israel occupied in the Six-Day War. And now, the catastrophe in New Orleans. It is impossible to avoid thinking that it reflects a very sick society.... What is happening to you, America? Because what happens to you seems to happen to us as well."

KURTZER